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Mr Leigh Tidswell-Brown
Headteacher
Seacroft Grange Primary School
Moresdale Lane
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS14 6JR

Dear Mr Tidswell-Brown

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Seacroft Grange Primary School, Leeds

Following my visit to your school on 21 October 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in June 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure, as matter of urgency, that all the recommendations from the recent review of governance are implemented so that governors have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to get to good and what part they need to play in helping it get there
- develop stronger partnerships with good and outstanding schools that will enable the school to share best practice and validate assessments of its own performance
- refine action plans to include more detail about the progress that all pupils can be expected to make and include targets for pupils who can make better than expected progress

Evidence

During the visit, I met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, a group of pupils, governors and representatives of the local authority. I evaluated a range of documentation including: the school improvement plan, data, tracking pupils' progress and the review of governance outcomes. In addition we undertook a tour of the school.

Context

Since the last inspection three new teachers have joined the school. As a result, the school now has an extended senior leadership team.

Main findings

You and your senior leaders have built on the work already started before the last inspection to ensure that the school addresses the issues raised in the inspection report and continues to improve. You and your leadership team have worked together to formulate and carry out a number of improvements focussed on effective teaching and learning and the behaviours for learning that support this. For example, a focus on developing basic maths skills has resulted in an improved attitude towards maths by pupils with many pupils being confident and enthusiastic to share their learning. You have ensured that effective practice is understood by all staff and is now embedded in classrooms by checking that teachers are promptly carrying out agreed policy in the lessons. As a result, behaviour in classrooms has improved and pupils are making better progress in their learning. Pupils say that they settle to their work more quickly and can concentrate in lessons better. Systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning have been strengthened. How staff are held to account for the progress their pupils are making is more sharply focussed. As a result of these initiatives, recent assessments show that the rate of pupils' progress is now accelerating in English and maths across the school.

A new system of rewards and sanctions has seen attendance in the school improve although punctuality still remains an issue.

The school improvement plan addresses the areas identified in the recent inspection. You have prioritised actions linked to improving teaching and learning but there is not enough emphasis on tracking the progress that pupils can be expected to make. The monitoring and evaluation processes are not clear. As a result, the milestones and success criteria lack sufficient clarity and governors cannot pinpoint with accuracy how well the school is improving over time.

Governors are not in a position to hold school leaders directly to account for recent planned actions to improve the school. They have, however, taken incisive action to ensure they can lead the school forward more effectively in the future. With the support of the local authority the governing body has undertaken a full review of its' own effectiveness and is being reconstituted to provide a smaller, more sharply focused group to provide greater challenge and support to the school leadership. This process has distracted them from ensuring that they have fully contributed to,

and understand, the developments currently happening in the school. It is essential that the recommendations contained within their recent review are implemented fully and quickly to ensure that governors can fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has provided support that is appropriate and proportionate. They know the school well and have a programme of monitoring visits to ensure the school is improving. The local authority has provided significant input into the review and reconstitution of governance. This is helping secure more effective leadership and management in the school.

The school accesses some support from other schools. These arrangements are not utilised to support school improvement. A range of partnerships with good and outstanding schools would contribute to securing the accuracy of the school's self evaluation and provide support for governors, teachers and middle leaders in developing their roles.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Leeds.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Brown

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority – including where the school is an academy